

TAKING LOUISIANA'S RECOVERY TO THE NEXT LEVEL

While the first quarter of LRA activity was focused on laying the foundation for the recovery, the second quarter focused on rebuilding the housing, infrastructure and businesses that form the backbone of every community, as well as securing the funding necessary to make this rebuilding a reality. This quarter was also marked by community-wide planning exercises designed to help residents in devastated areas envision how their communities can be rebuilt in ways that are safer, stronger and smarter than before.

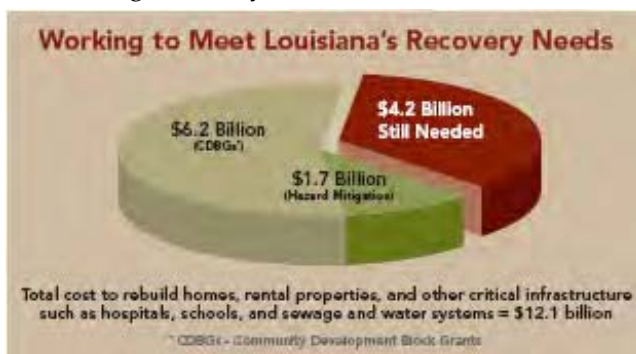
Securing Funding & Other Resources

Securing the funds necessary to implement recovery programs has been a major focus of Governor Blanco and the LRA.

In December, as part of the Gulf Coast Aid Package, Congress appropriated \$11.5 billion for states suffering from hurricanes. The LRA has used this funding in part to create incentives and funding opportunities for businesses that suffered from the storms. It also targeted funding to help local and municipal governments rebuild critical infrastructure.

But realizing that no recovery would be possible without the return of residents, Governor Blanco and the LRA went back to Washington, D.C. to make the case for additional recovery funding for housing and levees.

In December Louisiana had only received 54 percent, or \$6.2 billion of the CDBG funds available, despite having suffered more than 75 percent of the Gulf Coast housing damages. Louisiana lost more than 200,000 homes to hurricanes Katrina and Rita. However, it only received a fraction of the funding necessary to rebuild.



Using hard facts and data to demonstrate Louisiana's critical recovery needs, the LRA convinced President Bush to request additional hurricane relief funds for Louisiana. Emergency Supplemental Appropriation bills have been approved by both the U.S. House and Senate. While these bills are different, both versions include the funding President Bush has requested for Louisiana's recovery efforts. Governor Blanco and the LRA are working with Louisiana's Congressional delegation and others to ensure that Congress honors President Bush's request and acts soon to provide the much-needed funding to fortify our levees and address critical housing needs.

Support Foundation

Some LRA board members are also working to secure private investments through the LRA Support Foundation. Since its creation, the LRA Support Foundation has raised \$7.9 million in private contributions and pledges. These funds have been used to hire some of the best minds in the country to advise the LRA, local governments and residents on key policy and planning issues. The firms hired by the LRA Support Organization include: Calthorpe Associates, Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, Urban Design Associates, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Collective Strength, Center for Planning Excellence.

For more information about the LRA Support Foundation, visit www.lrasupportfoundation.org.

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)

The purpose of the HMGP is to reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters and to rebuild in ways that prevent damage from similar storms.

To accomplish this, the LRA authorized the release of \$250 million that had been approved by the Legislature to help parishes prevent damage from future disasters. It also directed the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOSHEP) to distribute to local governments the first hazard mitigation funding available. Full applications for both disasters are due August 29. Funding calculations are currently being calculated, based on modifications required by parishes.

The remainder of Louisiana's HMGP allocation (approximately \$1.4 billion) will be used to fund mitigation efforts as part of *The Road Home* housing plan.

Community Development Block Grant Funding

The LRA has developed plans for the use of a total CDBG allocation of \$10.4 billion. This includes the \$6.2 billion that was allocated to Louisiana in December and the \$4.2 billion that is currently pending final approval in Congress. If the additional \$4.2 billion is not part of the final Emergency Supplemental Appropriation bill, these plans will be withdrawn and modified.

Governor Blanco and the LRA have committed to use CDBG dollars to:

- repair and rebuild the state's permanent housing stock;
- urge reinvestment in multi-family rental units;
- rebuild infrastructure, and provide short-term capital assistance and investment for the long-term recovery and growth of Louisiana's economy.

Establishing Principles & Policies for Redevelopment

HOUSING: *The Road Home*

The recovery of South Louisiana relies on the return of its people. To assist more than 200,000 residents whose homes were damaged or destroyed by the disasters, Governor Blanco and the LRA, working in partnership with the Office of Community Development (OCD) and national housing experts, designed a housing program, known as *The Road Home*.

Restoring Louisiana's Housing Stock

The Road Home housing plan provides grants to eligible homeowners for uninsured, uncompensated damages to their homes. The grants would have a cap of \$150,000 for homeowners to repair, rebuild, relocate in Louisiana or sell their homes and leave the state.

The Road Home also includes incentives for rental property owners and developers to replace the tens of thousands of

STATUS OF RECOVERY PROGRAMS & FUNDING APPROVALS

As of June 1, 2006

Housing

The Road Home is a \$9.5 billion program to stimulate the restoration of South Louisiana's decimated housing stock. When fully funded, this groundbreaking program will represent the single largest, reconstruction program in U.S. history.

Startup Costs for *The Road Home* housing plan (\$17.1 million CDBG)



Implementation of *The Road Home* (\$9.25 billion using both CDBG & HMGP) *



* Congress is currently considering final approval of the \$4.2 billion necessary to fully fund the program.

Infrastructure

The LRA committed to invest \$2.5 billion in CDBG funds to repair, replace and rebuild other critical infrastructure in Southeast and Southwest Louisiana.

Local Government Emergency Infrastructure Program (\$100 million)



State Building Infrastructure Program (\$150 million)



* The LRA has approved expansion of this program.

Economic and Workforce Development

The LRA committed to invest \$350 million in CDBG funds to support the renewal of Louisiana's economy.

Louisiana Bridge Loan Program (\$100 million)



Long-Term Recovery Loan Program (\$100 million)



Small Firm Recovery Loan & Grant Program (\$40 million)



Technical Assistance to Small Firms (\$10 million)



Louisiana Tourism Program (\$30 million)



Hazard Mitigation

The LRA committed to invest \$250 million in CDBG funds to support the renewal of Louisiana's economy.

Parish Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (\$250 million)



Programs are born out of Action Plans, which must go through several steps before the LRA can use the money set aside for a particular purpose.

KEY:



= Published for public comment



= Received final approval

rental properties damaged or destroyed by the storms. The rental component prioritizes the development of deeply affordable rental units within mixed income communities in an effort to support the return of the workforce in South Louisiana and to discourage blight and deterioration in neighborhoods. *The Road Home* also contains funding for homeless supports and local government code enforcements. When fully funded, *The Road Home* program will provide more than \$9 billion to improve housing options for Louisianans. For more specific details about The Road Home housing plan, visit www.lra.louisiana.gov/road_home.html.

Building Widespread Support for *The Road Home*

In February, Governor Blanco and the LRA outlined a preliminary housing plan that became known as *The Road Home*. Over the next few months, the LRA developed *The Road Home* with valuable input from residents, community leaders and national housing experts.

After months of collecting preliminary feedback, the action plan for *The Road Home* was published in April for an official 10-day public comment period. Governor Blanco and the LRA performed extensive public outreach to collect feedback on *The Road Home*. The plan was made available online at www.LouisianaRebuilds.info in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. Printed copies were also made available to individuals upon request. The state placed public notices in newspapers and libraries throughout Louisiana and in major cities out-of-state where the majority of displaced residents were residing. Governor Blanco, the LRA and OCD also hosted open houses in New Orleans and Lake Charles. During this time, citizens and stakeholders provided more than 1,000 comments on the proposed program. As a result of the feedback received, the program was revised to address many of the concerns, suggestions and ideas expressed. A summary of the comments and responses is available online at http://lra.louisiana.gov/road_home.html.

“ Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco and chief aide Andy Kopplin deserve credit for drawing together a diverse group of leaders and assembling a sturdy recovery plan that appears capable of judiciously and speedily dispensing up to \$150,000 in recovery funding to homeowners determined to rebuild their home state.

New Orleans CityBusiness

May 26, 2006

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Shortly thereafter, the LRA and Louisiana Public Broadcasting (LPB) collaborated to produce a one-hour television program which featured a community discussion on *The Road Home*. In May, the program, "Louisiana Public Square," was broadcast in markets throughout the state in an effort to inform citizens on the key principles of the housing program.

As a result of this work, *The Road Home* has gained widespread support from

Don Powell, the President's coordinator for Gulf Coast recovery, Louisiana's Congressional delegation, the Louisiana Legislature and the White House. On May 30, 2006, U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Alphonso Jackson announced his approval of the program and expressed President Bush's desire to see it receive full funding from Congress. As previously noted, President Bush has requested Congress to approve an additional \$4.2 billion in CDBG funds for Louisiana. This money is necessary to fully fund *The Road Home*.

Implementing *The Road Home*

To speed up the delivery of assistance to homeowners, the state launched a housing registry. As of June 1, about 80,000 families had registered for the program. Through the Division of Administration (DOA), the state has also issued a Solicitation for Offers (SFO) to hire a private firm to implement the program. This firm will provide one-on-one assistance to residents and put the power, speed, and efficiency of the private sector to work in getting residents back into their homes.

LEVEES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Residents cannot rebuild and businesses cannot return without strong levees and operable and safe roads, schools, sewer systems, ports and other forms of infrastructure.

Progress of the Corps of Engineers

Securing full funding for comprehensive levee protection and coastal restoration

DID YOU KNOW?

When fully-funded, *The Road Home* will represent — by far — the largest single housing reconstruction program in U.S. History.



remains a top priority of the LRA. While this work can't happen soon enough for residents of Louisiana and for those around the country who depend on the goods and materials shipped through waterways and ports, much progress is being made. The Army Corps of Engineers recently announced that the levees damaged by Katrina and Rita are 100 percent repaired and exceed pre-Katrina strength. In addition to the repairs, the Corps is restoring undamaged areas to design heights and expediting work on previously authorized projects, which were scheduled for completion in September 2007.

The LRA is working with our Congressional delegation and others to ensure that the Emergency Supplemental Appropriation bill, which is awaiting final Congressional approval, includes President Bush's \$3.7 billion request for our levees. This funding will support a number of improvements to the flood protection system and allow the Corps to bring levees in the New Orleans area up to elevations necessary for FEMA certification against the 100-year storm. This is critical for the protection of the citizens and commerce of Southeast Louisiana. If this money is appropriated, construction of the certified levees and enhancements could be complete by 2010. It should be noted that this proposed appropriation does not include money to certify the levees of lower Plaquemines Parish, although the Corps is currently refining its cost estimates for protection of this area.

In addition to these projects, the Army Corps of Engineers has been directed by Congress to complete the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Study (LaCPR) by December 2007. The result of this \$20 million study will be a comprehensive technical report that analyzes higher levels of protection for Louisiana's entire coast, including structural features and coastal restoration. An interim report is due in June 2006, and this report may include immediate requests for authorization of actionable parts of the plan.

Helping Local Governments Rebuild

The infrastructure of communities throughout South Louisiana was battered by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the failure of the New Orleans levee system, but Louisiana has committed to investing \$2.5 billion in CDBG funds to leverage even more dollars to repair, replace and rebuild our roads,

“ If the city cannot provide hurricane protection through their levee systems, the people of New Orleans – their families, homes, schools, healthcare facilities and businesses – will not be able to rebuild.” ”

Federal Coordinator Don Powell

In a letter to Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Thad Cochran, May 15, 2006

schools, hospitals, ports, and other public service infrastructure. This rebuilding is critically important as we work to put our communities back together.

The LRA recommended the use of \$100 million to provide funding for emergency infrastructure projects of local governments who have adopted the latest base flood elevations of the FEMA Flood Recovery Guidance.

The LRA also proposed \$150 million of CDBG dollars to be used as a FEMA match for the repair and reconstruction

of damaged or destroyed state buildings according to the prioritization of the Office of Facility Planning. Both of these plans were approved by the Louisiana Legislature and received HUD approval on May 9, 2006.

The LRA is currently developing programmatic guidance to cover all other federal match costs for local infrastructure projects meeting LRA standards. These CDBG funds can be used for the non-federal match to repair or rebuild schools, roads, airports, transit systems, ports, wastewater treatment systems, and public water systems. These dollars can also be used to provide funds for infrastructure repairs that are not eligible for FEMA public assistance programs, including bringing structures up to code and rebuilding underinsured facilities.

The LRA is committed to leveraging these dollars to achieve the greatest investment possible in the public infrastructure of our communities to make them safer, stronger and smarter.

ECONOMY AND WORKFORCE

The loss of about 18,000 businesses to hurricanes Katrina and Rita impacted the livelihoods of residents and the local revenues that are the lifeblood of communities throughout the hurricane-impacted region.

Reviving Louisiana's Economy

The LRA is committed to supporting the renewal of the economy in Louisiana, particularly in those industries, small businesses and cultural destinations that make Louisiana such a wonderful place to live, work, visit and do business. The LRA has committed significant resources through the development of program recommendations for

approximately \$350 million in CDBG dollars aimed at reviving Louisiana's economy.

The first of these programs, the **Louisiana Bridge Loan Program**, received final approval from HUD on May 9. In January, the LRA approved the use of \$100 million in CDBG dollars for this program. Loans provided through this program will offer up to \$100,000 in temporary working capital to businesses located in 37 affected parishes. By guaranteeing loan funds provided by participating banks, this bridge loan program will offer six-month, interest-free financing to qualifying small business owners who choose to remain in their affected areas.

The LRA has authorized program development for an additional \$100 million in CDBG funds for a **Long Term Recovery Loan Program**, which would leverage approximately \$550 million to provide companies funding for fixed assets (real estate, buildings), equipment, and working capital. The LRA has also approved \$40 million for program development of a **Small Firm Recovery Loan and Grant Program** for firms that do not qualify for bank and/or SBA loans. The program will support low-cost working capital loans on flexible terms, small grants to reimburse for tangible losses and technical assistance.

The LRA further approved program development for \$10 million in CDBG funds to provide **Technical Assistance to Small Firms**. The program would contract with intermediaries to provide assistance to small business owners, nonprofits and entrepreneurs or individuals seeking to start a new business in the impacted area.

Finally, the LRA approved program development for the use of \$30 million for a **Louisiana Tourism Recovery Program**. The program would help revive the second largest industry in the state in

“ I am terribly impressed with the deliberations of the LRA. Your deliberation, your thoughtfulness, your bias for action ... I think that's terribly important. You're a model for young people and for other Americans to watch democracy in action.

Don Powell
LRA Board Meeting

terms of employment in an effort to stem the loss of millions of dollars per day in visitor spending.

Proposals are currently being developed to allocate additional CDBG dollars to support the recovery of workforce training programs and a program to assist in rebuilding the research capacity in higher education institutions in the impacted areas.

Proactive Policy Development for the Future

While the LRA has focused much of its work this quarter on rebuilding housing, infrastructure and the economy in devastated areas, LRA task forces continued to lay the groundwork for significant gains in other critical aspects of the recovery.

HEALTH CARE

Louisiana State University and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs signed a memorandum of understanding to collaborate on rebuilding their badly damaged health care facilities in New Orleans. To address the loss of the VA hospital and both the LSU Charity and University hospitals in New Orleans, LSU and the VA are studying the feasibility of jointly building a teaching hospital and level one

trauma center in downtown New Orleans. Through a combination of independent and shared facilities and services, the long-term vision is for the new facilities to be part of a medical complex that includes teaching, research and high-end health care services for a broad spectrum of patients and providing for more efficient delivery of medical care.

Local Health Care Rebuilding Plans

Initial local health care recovery plans for Cameron Parish, Orleans/Jefferson Parishes, Plaquemines Parish, St. Bernard and the

SIGNS OF PROGRESS



Nineteen African black-footed penguins and two sea otters were recently brought back to New Orleans, after being rescued from the Aquarium of the Americas in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. After nearly nine months away from home, the city's beloved sea animals were sent back to the Big Easy just in time for their big debut. The aquarium re-opened its doors on May 26, 2006 to more than 3,000 visitors.

Baton Rouge area have been completed. These recovery plans are a product of a three-month planning process facilitated by the Department of Health and Hospitals' Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Louisiana Public Health Institute, each involving hundreds of local community health care stakeholders.

The plans are based on a coordinated, strategic approach to achieve comprehensive and unduplicated health care service delivery and optimize available funding in the areas devastated by the hurricanes. The plans also include a statewide plan for health care workforce recruitment and retention. While these plans will continue to develop over time, they can now serve as a template for grant funding applications to federal, state and private sources and have positioned the communities for implementation. The plans for each area are online at www.pcrh.dhh.louisiana.gov.

PricewaterhouseCoopers Report

The LRA Support Foundation, on behalf of the LRA, hired PricewaterhouseCoopers to develop a plan for redesigning the health care system of South Louisiana in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The report addresses three critical areas: emergency preparedness and disaster recovery; health care workforce and medical education needs (especially in areas of highest devastation); and design of a health system that will ensure equal access to quality care for all Louisianans. Upon receipt of this report, the LRA immediately endorsed several recovery-related recommendations and submitted the entire report to Governor Blanco, the Legislature, and others "to guide their planning for and implementation of long-term redesign of a statewide health care system of high quality and sustainability."

As these efforts move forward, the LRA will continue to sup-

port recovery and redesign health care initiatives in Southwest and Southeast Louisiana. Elements of this report directly related to health care recovery in the hurricane-impacted areas and will be considered in the planning for long-term recovery for these areas. The full report is posted online at www.lra.louisiana.gov.

HUMAN SERVICES

Providing for the human and social service needs of our vulnerable populations as well as those who may need assistance for the first time due to the storms is a key focus of the LRA.

Social Services Block Grants

The LRA, in consultation with the Division of Administration (DOA), the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH), recommended and received legislative approval for using the \$220 million in Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) dollars awarded to the state. The funds would provide case management services through the Louisiana Family Recovery Corps for child welfare services, childcare services, behavioral health services, and preventive and primary care. They would also help restore the public health care safety net as well as health and human service care infrastructure.

The LRA also collaborated with DSS to develop a homeless-

ness plan as part of *The Road Home* housing plan, to be funded with CDBG dollars. This plan will address the increased homeless needs in impacted areas by increasing beds, facility capacity, and supportive services for the homeless through repairing and restoring shelter and housing capacity as well as acquiring new permanent supportive housing and services, and providing prevention assistance to those persons who are at risk of becoming homeless.

SSBG FUNDING

In March, the LRA approved the use of \$220 million in supplemental Social Services Block Grants awarded to Louisiana in response to the hurricanes.

The funding was allocated as follows:

Department of Social Services: \$34.2 million

- \$17.6 million for child welfare services
- \$14.4 million for child care services
- \$2.2 million for the monitoring and oversight of the SSGB allocation

Department of Health and Hospitals: \$101.7 million

- \$80 million for behavioral health services
- \$21.7 million for preventive and primary care

LSU Health Sciences Center: \$70 million

- \$50 million for the Health Sciences Center
- \$20 million for the health care services division

Louisiana Family Recovery Corps: \$15 million

EDUCATION

The educational infrastructure in Louisiana was heavily impacted by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The LRA is recommending the dedication of a portion of CDBG dollars for use in building a public educational system that is not only safer and stronger, but also provides students with a first-class education.

Recovery School District

The State Department of Education hosted the first meeting of the Recovery School District Advisory

Committee on March 21 in New Orleans. The committee, comprised of 23 state-level and local community leaders who serve in an advisory capacity to State Education Superintendent Cecil Picard, is focused on developing short- and long-term plans for the rebuilding of public schools in Orleans Parish.

School Openings

Currently, all hurricane-affected districts in Southeast and Southwest Louisiana have resumed classes in either partial or full capacity to accommodate returning populations. In Orleans Parish, three additional schools reopened in April, bringing the total number of schools open to 25. There are now more than 11,000 students enrolled in Orleans Parish schools. This is about 20 percent of the students that were enrolled prior to the hurricanes.

Between June 2006 and the beginning of the school year in August 2006, an additional 25 K-12 public schools are scheduled to open in New Orleans. These newly opened schools will demand the hiring of approximately 800 additional teachers in an area that has limited housing stock. In cooperation with the Recovery School District and the non-profit organization New Schools for New Orleans, the LRA is devising innovative policies that will provide Orleans Parish teachers and other necessary staff with low-cost, high-quality housing in the Greater New Orleans area.

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The Louisiana Department of Education opened its first three schools through the Recovery School District on April 18, 2006. The opening of A. Craig Elementary, Benjamin Banneker Elementary, and Joseph S. Clark Senior High School provided space for 1,300 additional students in Orleans Parish.

ENVIRONMENT

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have worked diligently to ensure that Louisiana residents and their communities are environmentally safe.

Soil Sampling

Soil sampling maps were made available on the DEQ Web site at the end of February to allow citizens to examine findings of an extensive environmental sampling

effort by the EPA and DEQ. During this sampling, approximately 5 percent of samples (~40 out of 800) had readings that warranted further evaluation. The areas identified for further evaluation were localized and did not indicate widespread environmental contamination due to the storm, although DEQ officials are continuing to evaluate the sites. Overall, none of the sediment data showed any short-term health risks.

Debris Removal

There was enough construction and demolition debris to fill the Empire State Building 40 times or to fill the Louisiana Superdome more than 13 times, but debris removal is moving along at a rapid pace. In the first six months of recovery, workers removed more than 25 times the amount of debris from Louisiana than was removed from the World Trade Center site. Nearly 15 million pounds of hazardous waste has been collected and properly disposed of, and nearly 3.4 million orphan containers (drums, canisters, tanks, etc.) have been collected.

Wastewater Treatment

Finally, much work is being done to encourage qualified wastewater treatment facilities to utilize wetlands assimilation techniques and other innovative technologies, which will help build protective areas for future storms. DEQ and EPA are working with wastewater treatment facilities to increase awareness of options and assistance. They also conducted a Wastewater Wetlands Assimilation workshop

to educate facilities on the viability of this technique for wastewater treatment.

Leading Long-Term Community & Regional Planning Efforts

In the aftermath of Katrina and Rita, Louisiana has embarked upon the most ambitious recovery planning effort the country has seen. The long-term planning initiative of the LRA, dubbed Louisiana Speaks, is designed to support development of a sustainable, long-term vision for South Louisiana. In keeping with the LRA's philosophy of rebuilding safer, stronger and smarter, the principles that drive this initiative will ensure that the recovery and rebuilding process is fair and equitable to everyone.

Louisiana Speaks is supported by the LRA Support Foundation— a private, nonprofit organization — which raised private funds to secure a world-renowned team of planners, designers and architects that will help develop Louisiana's long-term rebuilding plan.

Louisiana Speaks With One Voice

A successful long-term recovery effort will require more than just programs and funding, it will require comprehensive planning. Louisiana Speaks will support the coordinated planning effort that is necessary for us to recover and grow. This initiative addresses planning at every level of recovery: buildings, neighborhoods, parishes and the South Louisiana region.

Building Planning

Over the coming years, thousands of houses and businesses will be rebuilt in South Louisiana. To ensure that the structures built today will be the foundation for tomorrow, they must be built safer, stronger, and smarter. To support the development of tools that will help in the rebuilding effort of residents and businesses, the LRA worked with Urban Design Associates to develop Pattern Books and Tool Boxes that include storm-safe techniques, sustainable design, "green" building design, and other planning principles. All this information, plus best practices for community planning will be included in the "tool box" booklets, which will be widely distributed in July.

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"The selection of a planning team itself signals a major change here — an embrace of rational, long-range, comprehensive planning as a legitimate mode of dealing with growth and change."

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Baton Rouge Real Estate Weekly
January 2006

SIGNS OF PROGRESS



St. Bernard Parish residents take part in planning the future of their communities.

Neighborhood Planning

Working with world-renowned planner Andres Duany of Duany, Plater-Zyberk & Company, the LRA hosted neighborhood planning workshops or "charrettes" in which architects and planners worked with residents in downtown Lake Charles, South Acadiana, Arabi and other parts of St. Bernard Parish to develop neighborhood rebuilding and improvement plans. Two of these innovative plans have already been adopted by local governments and are moving forward. As more and more neighborhoods rebuild, they will serve as "building blocks" for parish and regional plans.

Parish Planning

Since October, planning teams have been working with local officials, community leaders and residents in impacted parishes to develop parish-specific recovery plans. Through this process, each parish crafted its own vision, identified goals and priorities, conducted needs assessments, developed a community base-line and identified priority projects. Working with FEMA's Long Term Community Recovery Division, ESF-14, the LRA developed a new web-based Parish Recovery Planning Tool, available through, www.louisianaspeaks.org where these parish plans are now available online.

These parish plans include project details for road repairs, water and sewer repair and support for housing programs. These are projects that will benefit all the neighborhoods in

PARTNERS IN REBUILDING

Louisiana Speaks will combine the wealth of knowledge of residents, community leaders, and local architects with the expertise of world-class planners, including: Calthorpe Associates, Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, and Urban Design Associates.

Other distinguished partners in planning include:

ABMB Engineers, Inc.
The Brookings Institution
Brown+Danos landdesign, Inc.
Collective Strength
Enterprise Community Partners
Fregonese Calthorpe Associates
Jonathan Rose Companies LLC
Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.
PolicyLink
Coastal Louisiana Ecosystem Assessment and Restoration (CLEAR)

For full biographies, visit www.louisianaspeaks.org.

each parish. Many priority projects identified through this process will be incorporated into the scenarios which are being developed in the long-range regional planning process.

Regional Planning

In the wake of Katrina and Rita, new plans are in order for many Louisiana communities. Planning that identifies and prioritizes recovery projects has already taken place in affected parishes. Community planning for neighborhoods and cities is also underway. New and reconstructed buildings, roads, and parks will help bring back what was lost.

But South Louisiana is more than just a collection of towns. In very real ways, we're all connected, and our futures are intertwined. Many natural and man-made systems, such as wetlands, highways and regional economies, spill across city and parish lines. These features affect the daily lives of people in many different towns, parishes, and metro areas. Regional planning allows us to go beyond governmental boundaries.

The regional planning process will support the development of a vision for South Louisiana that respects the history of each community and creates a healthier, stronger future for everyone. That means a plan that brings together wetlands restoration, storm protection, stronger economies, better schools, improved access to jobs and housing, and new growth protected from natural disasters.

Working with Calthorpe Associates and others, the LRA is working to build a network of more than 1,000 stakeholders who will come together in July at a series of large

workshops hosted across the state. The goal of these workshops is to begin creating a series of "pictures" of what South Louisiana might look like in the future, depending on the choices and trade-offs we make along the way.

From this initial feedback, Louisiana Speaks will begin a broad public discussion about Louisiana's future and work to engage thousands of residents at home and those who are displaced. This community-driven process will result in the development of a 25-year plan for the recovery and rebirth of South Louisiana.

Ensuring transparency and accountability

Fraud Prevention and Investigations Task Force

This quarter, the LRA Audit Committee worked closely with federal and state partners to examine ways to ensure the responsible use of CDBG dollars. Upon receiving a recommendation from the Audit Committee at the May 17 meeting, the LRA created an interagency working group, the Fraud Prevention and Investigations Task Force, which has been charged with creating a coordinated plan to identify potential areas of fraud, create a mechanism to prevent fraud and investigate individual cases of fraud, determine the method to prosecute those who are suspects of fraud and propose penalties for those individuals or corporations who are convicted of fraud.

The task force will be led and staffed by the Office of the Attorney General and shall be comprised of representatives of the LRA Audit Committee, the State Inspector General's Office, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of the Inspector General, the U. S. Attorney's Office, the Division of Administration's Office of Community Development, and the Office of the Legislative Auditor.

Conclusion

Over the past eight months, the LRA has worked diligently with Governor Blanco to set the priorities, develop the policies and secure the funding required to breathe new life into Louisiana's devastated coastal parishes.

The past four months have produced sweeping programs for rehabilitating Louisiana's housing, infrastructure and economy and for laying the groundwork for the most significant rebuilding effort in American history.

The next few months will see Louisianans making some of the biggest decisions any group of people will ever make — decisions about rebuilding their lives and reshaping their communities and futures. The LRA will continue to work on behalf of these courageous people to preserve their rich heritage while building what must become a more vital, prosperous and proud Louisiana.